Three Constable Karl Blom Mysteries

THE missing TOME

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Thanos Kalamidas

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The silent inheritance
The Evedal alibi

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The Växjö church was quiet. Too quiet. Karl Blom stepped inside, boots echoing against the old wooden floor. Dust motes floated in the slanting sunlight. Nothing seemed out of place. Nothing, that is, until Karl's eyes flicked to the shelves behind the altar.

A book was missing. Not just any book. A rare liturgical manuscript, centuries old, bound in cracked leather and gilt edges. "Odd," Karl muttered. "You'd think a book this old would just… vanish into thin air?"

The old caretaker, a wiry man named Olle, shuffled by. "It's gone!" he whispered, as if the church itself might overhear. "I... someone ...stole it!"

Karl nodded, calm, noting the dust patterns on the shelves. Someone had hidden it ...cleverly, but not cleverly enough. And Karl, silent observer, had already seen everything.

The vanishing act

Karl met Ida at their usual café. Steam curled from mugs of strong coffee. The morning sun slanted through the windows, dust motes dancing in the light.

"Big day?" she asked, brushing a strand of hair behind her ear. Karl shrugged. "The book's gone. But I think I've found it."

Ida raised an eyebrow. "You found a book that's… missing?"

"Yes," he said. "And the thief? Not very good at hiding things."

She frowned. "Not good at hiding things? You make it sound so… casual. Someone stole a priceless manuscript, Karl. Casual doesn't seem appropriate."

Karl didn't answer. He sipped his coffee, eyes scanning the café. Patrons came and went, oblivious. It was exactly the way he liked the world, predictable, orderly, until it wasn't.

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The church was quiet. Too quiet. Karl crouched by the shelves behind the altar. Dust layered the wood like forgotten snow. He traced his finger over the surface. A smudge. Faint, almost imperceptible, but there.

He squinted. Someone had been here. Someone had moved things around. "Found it," he murmured. The book was heavy, bound in cracked leather. Gold leaf glimmered faintly in the sunbeams. It smelled of pine resin, old ink, and… age.

"You're amazing," Ida said, peering over his shoulder. "I barely see dust, let alone crimes."

Karl smirked. "Most people don't look."

Ida leaned closer. "And people who do look… what happens to them?"

Karl's smirk faded. He tapped the book gently. "They see things others don't. Sometimes… things they wish they hadn't."

She shivered. “You sound ominous.”

“I prefer accurate,” he said.

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Back at the station, Karl logged the recovery. His handwriting was precise, methodical, neat. Every letter accounted for, every detail catalogued.

Lucas leaned in the doorway, arms crossed, a mischievous grin on his face. “So… you think someone tried to sell it?”

“Maybe,” Karl replied. “Or maybe someone wanted to make a point.”

Lucas snorted. “Nothing says intimidation like a centuries-old prayer book. I mean, really. What’s next? A holy relic chase at dawn?”

“Don’t tempt me,” Karl said flatly.

Lucas laughed. “You always sound like you’re narrating a documentary on human folly.”

Karl didn’t reply. He was already thinking about patterns, timelines, who had access.

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Later, Karl returned to the church. Olle, the caretaker, was nervously dusting the pews. He looked up, startled.

"Found it, did you?" Olle said, voice trembling.

"Yes," Karl said calmly. "In plain sight. With a little observation."

Olle wiped his hands on his trousers. "I don't understand. I saw it there yesterday. And then… gone! Vanished!"

"Vanished?" Karl echoed. "It never left. It was hidden."

Olle's jaw dropped. "Hidden? Where?"

Karl gestured to the shelf. "Right where you always place it. Someone just didn't respect dust patterns."

Olle blinked. "Dust patterns?"

Karl shrugged. "A thief who moves things leaves traces. You just have to know how to look."

Ida, standing nearby, whispered, "You really do see everything, don't you?"

Karl didn't answer. He was already scanning the church again. Something didn't sit right.

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A few hours later, Karl's phone rang. "Blom," he said. "Karl," Olle's panicked voice came through. "It's gone again! Another book! And this one… this one is older, more delicate… more valuable!"

Karl's stomach tightened. "Someone's taunting us," he muttered. "Deliberately."

Ida, standing beside him, raised an eyebrow. "Taunting? You sound like you're reading a detective novel."

Karl didn't smile. "I'm not. This is real. And the real problem? Whoever's doing this… they know the church. Very well."

Lucas appeared at the door of the café, leaning against the frame like a man who'd just won a minor victory. "So, we've got a thief who likes old books and humiliation. Sounds like a weekend plan."

Ida groaned. "Weekend plan? This is serious, Lucas!" Lucas waved a hand. "Relax. Karl's got it covered. He always does."

Karl didn't reply. He was already thinking ahead, plotting, imagining the thief's moves. Who had access? When? How? And why taunt them?

The church was supposed to be a sanctuary. Instead, it had become a playground for someone clever, someone bold.

Karl smiled faintly, a flash of humour hiding behind his eyes. "Time to play the quiet game," he said.

Ida tilted her head. "The quiet game?"

"You watch," Karl said. "The thief moves. We'll watch. And when they make a mistake… we'll be ready."

Outside, the morning sun burned off the mist. Inside, Karl felt the thrill of the hunt. And so, the game began.

The cat-and-mouse

Växjö had a small-town charm. Cobblestone streets. Wooden shutters. The smell of fresh bread from the bakery on Fiskaregatan.

But charm had cracks. Karl felt them as he followed the man. A wiry figure, jacket too big, hands stuffed in pockets. He moved fast. Too fast. Like he knew Karl was coming.

Karl stayed in the shadows, stepping lightly. Crates, trash bins, parked bicycles, they were his camouflage. "Lucas," he whispered into his phone. The street was quiet. "I've got eyes on him. North alley. Corner of Fiskaregatan."

"Do not let him see you!" Lucas's voice crackled, a mix of panic and amusement. "You know what hap-

pens if he spots you?" Karl didn't answer. Timing was everything. The man glanced over his shoulder. Karl froze.

The alley went narrow. A cat darted out of a doorway, hissed, and disappeared. The man slipped past, nearly tripping over a loose cobblestone. Karl took a breath. Step. Step. Step. He was close. Then ...poof. Gone. Shadows swallowed him. Karl cursed under his breath.

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Back at the church that evening, Karl let out a slow sigh. Ida had made tea. Cinnamon rolls. Steam curled in the lamplight.

"You need a plan," she said. "Or maybe just a vacation." Karl smiled faintly. "A plan is in progress. Vacation is not an option."

Ida raised an eyebrow. "Says the man who almost tripped over a cat today."

Karl ignored her. He checked the shelves again, dust and fingerprints under the halo of his flashlight. The thief left traces, patterns, like breadcrumbs. Almost like he wanted Karl to follow.

Karl crouched. A noise from the nave. Footsteps. Slow, careful. "Hello?" he called, voice steady, calm. Nothing. Silence. He flicked the light switch. Nothing moved. Then a small piece of parchment fluttered to his feet.

"Next time, don't be late."

Karl frowned. He picked it up. Not threatening. Taunting. The handwriting precise, neat. Deliberate.

"Lucas," he said into the phone, "we've got a taunter. Not just a thief." Lucas whistled. "Oh, great. A game player. That's comforting." Karl smirked. "Comforting is overrated."

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The next day, Karl returned to the streets. Early. Mist clung to the cobblestones. He paced the alleys, eyes sharp. Every shadow, every trash can, every doorway a potential hiding spot.

He spotted the man again, this time near the old canal. Karl followed. Soft steps. Heart steady. Breath controlled. The thief looked back, quick, sharp. Karl ducked behind a market stall.

"Lucas," he whispered, "he's moving west. Near the canal docks."

"Stay calm," Lucas said. "Or don't. Whatever. Just don't get caught."

Karl pressed forward. The canal was empty. Fog rolled off the water. The thief paused, glanced around.

Karl froze.

Then, splash. The man jumped into a small boat, hidden behind crates. He rowed silently, shadows swallowing him again. Karl sighed. One step closer.

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Back at the church, Ida was waiting. "You're obsessed," she said, handing him a cinnamon roll. "You know that, right?"

Karl took it, smiled faintly. "Obsessed is just… focused. Focused works better."

They sat in silence for a moment, listening to the faint ticking of the old church clock. Then Karl spoke. "The thief knows the church," he said. "He knows the layout, the schedules, the routines. This is personal."

Ida shook her head. “Personal? It’s a book, Karl.”

“Not to him,” Karl said. He touched the dust patterns on the shelf again. “He’s leaving a trail. Not intentionally, but he can’t help it. That’s our advantage.”

He studied the parchment again. *Next time, don’t be late.*

Karl smiled faintly. “He wants me to chase him. Fine. I’ll chase him. But on my terms.”

Ida smirked. “Just don’t let him push you into the canal this time.”

Karl chuckled. “No promises.”

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Hours later, Karl lay awake in his small apartment, mind racing. Every detail, every clue, every shadow replayed in his head.

He thought of the alleyways. The docks. The cat. The parchment.

A plan formed. A trap. Simple. Elegant.

And Karl knew, quietly, that Växjö’s charm might

have cracks but those cracks made the perfect hiding spots.

Somebody wanted a game.

Karl intended to win.

The Big Reveal

Karl crouched behind a pew, dust motes dancing in the slanting sunlight. His eyes didn't leave the low shelf at the back of the nave. On it sat replicas of the church's rare books, stacked carefully, edges gilded, covers polished. Flour had been sprinkled around them, a trap for fingerprints, footprints, mistakes.

Lucas leaned against a column, arms crossed. "Karl, this is either genius… or insane." Karl didn't look at him. "Mostly genius."

Ida stood near the doorway, arms folded. "Mostly genius? You're stacking fake books and flour in a church. Genius is not the word that comes to my mind."

Karl smiled faintly. "Efficient. That's the word."

Hours passed. The church was quiet, too quiet. Karl's hand hovered over a notebook, ready to jot down anything, footprints, a stray hair, the faint smell of ink.

And then ...movement. A shadow shifted across the flour. A hand reached for the nearest book. "Gotcha!" Lucas shouted, stepping out with dramatic flair.

The hand froze. Then jerked back. The shadow bolted.

Karl leapt after him. His boots skidded on the wet cobblestones outside. Rain had left puddles, glinting like mirrors. The thief, slim, wiry, jacket flapping, twisted and turned, trying to lose Karl in narrow alleys.

"Stop! Växjö police!" Karl yelled. The thief laughed, a short, breathless sound, half panic, half defiance.

Ida appeared at the end of the alley, holding a flashlight. "You're hopeless!" she called after Karl, shaking her head. "And slightly dramatic!"

Karl ignored her, eyes locked on the fleeing figure.

The chase led them to the old canal. Mist rolled over the water, hiding everything in a ghostly gray.

The thief skidded on the slippery edge. Karl lunged. They tumbled into the shallow water with a splash.

Lucas arrived, soaked to the waist, waving his arms. "I knew this would happen! I *knew* it!"

Karl wrestled the man upright, dragging him into the light. And then… Karl saw him clearly.

Olle, the church caretaker. His hands were black with ink, smudges under his fingernails. His eyes darted around, panicked, almost apologetic.

Karl held him tight. "Why?"

Olle swallowed, voice shaking. "I needed money… I thought… I thought no one would notice. I… I didn't mean any harm."

"You thought wrong," Karl said calmly, though a flicker of sympathy passed through his eyes. "Really wrong."

Lucas shook his head, dripping wet. "Of course it was Olle. Who else would know the church this well? It had to be him. Classic, huh?"

Ida stepped forward, hands on her hips. "And yet,

here we are. You two soaked. Flour everywhere. And me, waiting to serve tea to the mastermind. Genius."

Karl smiled faintly. "Lesson learned. Most truths… don't need loud voices. Just careful eyes."

Olle nodded miserably. "I'll return everything. I swear."

"Yes," Karl said. "And you'll be explaining yourself properly to the authorities."

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Back at the café, they sat with steaming mugs of coffee. Lucas slurped his with gusto. "Next time," he said, "pick a thief who doesn't know the church inside out. Or at least one who can't swim."

Ida rolled her eyes. "Next time? I think 'next time' should include dry clothes, warm rolls, and a sense of sanity."

Karl raised his cup. "To careful eyes," he said. "And patience. And sometimes… a little chaos."

Lucas laughed. "Mostly chaos."

Karl smirked. "Yes. Mostly chaos."

They sat in silence for a moment, letting the coffee warm their hands and their spirits. Outside, Växjö's streets were quiet again, mist curling over the cobblestones.

But Karl knew better. Somewhere, someone would always be scheming. Always testing limits. Always leaving clues.

And Karl would be watching. Always watching.

A faint smile tugged at his lips. Quietly, he thought, let them try.

The End

THE SILENT INHERITANCE

The old man died on a Tuesday. That alone should have been a warning.

Oskar Lindh had lived next door to Johan Nyström for twenty-seven years, spoken maybe forty words total, and now he was gone, found at the bottom of his basement stairs with his neck bent at a wrong, final angle.

Johan was the one who found the box. He wasn't snooping. He swore that later. He was fixing a burst pipe, crowbar in hand, when the floorboard came loose. Under it sat a narrow wooden case, wrapped in oilcloth, heavier than it looked.

Inside was a pocket watch. Gold. Intricately engraved. Still ticking. And tucked beneath it, a folded scrap of yellowed paper with a single line written in a careful, old-fashioned hand: If anyone asks, I never had this. That was when Johan heard footsteps behind him.

The Wrong Kind of Inheritance

Johan Nyström was a mechanic because machines made sense. People didn't. Engines failed for reasons. Humans failed creatively.

At thirty-eight, Johan owned a modest garage on the edge of Växjö, a squat concrete building that smelled of oil, coffee, and resignation. He fixed Volvos older than himself, nodded politely at customers, and kept his opinions to himself. That system worked.

So when a police officer knocked on his office door at ten in the morning, Johan assumed someone had complained about noise again. Instead, Karl Blom introduced himself and asked Johan to sit down. That was the first odd thing. Cops didn't usually ask.

"Oskar Lindh named you in his will," Karl said.

Johan blinked. "The man who lived next door?" Karl nodded once.

"The man who waved at me once in 2009?" Johan added. Another nod.

"Oskar barely knew my name," Johan said. "He called me 'young man' until last week."

"Still," Karl said calmly, "your name was the only one in the document." Johan laughed. It came out sharper than intended.

"Did he leave me his famous collection of dust?" Karl didn't smile.

That was warning number two, though Johan didn't recognize it yet.

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Oskar Lindh's house felt wrong. It wasn't haunted. It was *emptied*. Like someone had already taken everything important and left the shell behind.

Karl stayed by the door while Johan walked through the narrow rooms. Old furniture. No photos. No personal items. Just a man-shaped absence.

"The lawyer said there was one item," Karl said. "In the basement."

The basement smelled damp and old wood. Johan descended carefully, every step creaking like a complaint. "There," Karl said, pointing. A loose floorboard.

Johan knelt, pried it open, and revealed a long, narrow box wrapped in oilcloth. It was heavier than it should have been. Inside lay a pocket watch.

Gold. Intricately engraved. Still ticking.

Johan swallowed. "This isn't… normal."

"No," Karl agreed. "It's not."

Under the watch was a folded scrap of paper. Johan read it aloud. "If anyone asks, I never had this." Silence settled between them.

"Do people often leave notes like that?" Johan asked.

"Only when they're afraid," Karl said.

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Two hours later, Johan sat alone in his kitchen,

staring at the watch. He'd put it back in the box. Then taken it out again. Then put it back. Then out again.

The thing seemed to glow under the light, too refined for his scratched table and half-dead houseplant.

He googled antique watches. Bad idea. The numbers made his mouth dry. His phone rang. Unknown number. Johan stared at it, then answered.

"Yes?" A pause. Breathing.

Then a man's voice. Calm. Curious. "Enjoying your inheritance?"

Johan's stomach dropped. "Who is this?" Another pause.

"You should be careful with things that don't belong to you." The line went dead.

Johan sat very still. Then he locked the door.

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The garage was dark when Johan returned that night. Too dark.

The office light flickered on, revealing a mess, pa-

pers scattered, drawers pulled out, the door splintered near the lock. Nothing was stolen.

That scared him more than if everything had been.

On his workbench, scratched into the wood with something sharp, were two words: Give it back.

Johan exhaled slowly. “Give *what* back?” he muttered.

The watch ticked in his pocket, loud as a heartbeat.

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Karl Blom didn’t like surprises. He liked patterns. Quiet truths. Details people forgot to hide. So when Johan called him at midnight, Karl answered on the first ring.

“They broke into my garage,” Johan said. “Didn’t take anything.”

“Where are you now?”

“In my car. Driving.”

“Good,” Karl said. “Don’t go home.”

Johan laughed weakly. "That bad?" Karl didn't answer right away. That was worse.

"Bring the watch," Karl finally said. "We need to keep it safe." Johan glanced at the road ahead, empty and dark.

"Officer Blom?"

"Yes."

"I think this thing is trouble." Karl looked out his window at the quiet street below.

"Yes," he said. "I think so too."

And somewhere between the ticking of a watch and the hum of an engine, a small-town life quietly cracked open.

Everyone Lies Differently

Karl Blom liked pubs. Not because he drank much, two beers was his limit but because people forgot to be careful there. Alcohol loosened tongues. Noise hid truths.

The pub was called The Copper Elk, which suggested tradition and comfort. In reality, it smelled of fried food, old wood, and regrets.

Lucas was already three beers ahead when Johan arrived. “There he is!” Lucas boomed, waving like he was guiding in a rescue helicopter. “The man of mystery!”

Johan slid into the booth. “Keep your voice down.”

Lucas leaned closer. “That bad?” Johan nodded. “Someone broke into my garage.”

Lucas grinned. "See? I *knew* something interesting would happen to you eventually."

"Someone wants something I didn't know existed three days ago."

Lucas frowned. "Okay. Less fun."

Karl sat opposite them, quiet as a shadow, watching the room. He'd already catalogued exits, mirrors, reflections in windows.

"Tell him," Lucas said, jerking his thumb at Karl. "The quiet one already knows, doesn't he?"

Karl met Johan's eyes. "The watch."

Johan exhaled. "The watch."

Lucas blinked. "What watch?"

"Don't," Johan warned.

Lucas leaned back, delighted. "Oh, now you *have* to."

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They told him everything.

Lucas listened without interrupting, which alone was unsettling.

When they finished, he drained his glass and said, “So let me get this straight. Dead neighbour. Secret basement. Gold watch. Threatening phone calls.”

“Yes,” Johan said.

Lucas nodded slowly. “Classic mistake.”

“What mistake?” Johan asked.

“Accepting gifts from dead people.” Karl hid a smile behind his beer.

“Someone’s watching us,” Karl said suddenly.

Johan stiffened. “What?”

“Corner table,” Karl murmured. “Dark coat. Hasn’t touched his drink.”

Lucas glanced casually, then froze. “That guy’s been staring at you since you walked in.” Johan felt his skin prickle.

“I need air,” he said.

“Bad idea,” Karl replied. Too late.

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The street outside was cold and quiet. Footsteps echoed behind Johan. He sped up. So did they. He turned down an alley he'd walked a hundred times before. This time, it betrayed him.

A hand slammed him into the brick wall. The pain came fast. Sharp. Disorienting.

"Where is it?" a voice hissed. Johan tried to turn. Failed.

"I don't know what you're talking about!" The pressure increased. Something cold pressed against his ribs. A knife.

"You're lying," the man said calmly. "And I don't like liars." Johan laughed. It came out shaky. "Then you're in the wrong town."

The man's grip tightened. Then... "Police! Drop it!" The voice cut clean through the alley. The knife vanished.

Footsteps ran.

Karl sprinted past Johan, chasing shadows, but the man melted into darkness like he'd practiced it. Karl

stopped, breathing hard. Lucas appeared seconds later, wielding a bar stool like a medieval weapon.

"Did I miss it?"

"Yes," Karl said. "Thankfully."

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Back at the station, Johan sat wrapped in a blanket he didn't need. Karl placed the watch on the table between them.

"It's pre-war," Karl said. "German. Rare."

"How rare?" Lucas asked.

"Rare enough to kill for." Lucas whistled. "You know, most people just collect stamps."

Karl leaned back. "Oskar Lindh wasn't just a quiet old man."

Johan closed his eyes. "I was afraid you'd say that."

"He was a courier," Karl continued. "After the war. Moved stolen artefacts through Sweden."

Lucas blinked. "Your neighbour was a criminal?"

"A very careful one," Karl said.

"And now?" Johan asked.

"Now," Karl said softly, "someone wants to make sure the past stays buried."

The watch ticked. Loud. Relentless. Johan stared at it and realized something simple and terrifying. This wasn't over. This was just beginning.

The Price of Silence

Johan didn't sleep that night. Not because he wanted to. Because someone, somewhere, had made it impossible.

He kept checking the locks on his doors. Twice. Then a third time. His garage sat in darkness like a waiting trap. The wind rattled the windows. Every sound was amplified. Footsteps. A car door slamming across the street. The watch, ticking in his pocket, sounded like a heartbeat, louder than his own.

Karl Blom didn't sleep either. Not that anyone noticed. He walked quietly through his apartment, observing, cataloguing. Patterns. Threats. The world was dangerous, and Karl liked to see it before it hit.

Lucas, on the other hand, slept like the dead. Or so Johan assumed, until the phone rang.

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"Hello?" Johan's voice cracked. A pause. Then a slow, deliberate voice. "Johan Nyström," it said. "You've been meddling. That stops now."

"Who is this?" Johan demanded.

"You'll find out soon enough." Click. The line went dead. Johan stared at the receiver.

"That's not good," Lucas muttered from the couch, munching on leftover pizza. "Not good at all."

Karl stood silently in the corner, hands in his pockets. "It's exactly what I expected."

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The next day, things escalated. The watch, which had been locked in Karl's evidence drawer, vanished. No break-in. No fingerprints. Nothing. Just gone.

"Vanished?" Johan asked. "That's… impossible." Karl didn't answer. He was already reviewing CCTV footage from the street outside. Lucas leaned over his shoulder. "You're obsessed."

"I'm observant," Karl corrected. "Semantics," Lucas said. "You both need to calm down. Maybe drink a beer?" Karl didn't drink beer. Johan didn't feel like laughing. Lucas just shrugged. "Then I'll drink yours."

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The following evening, Johan returned from the grocery store to find smoke curling from Lucas's workshop.

"What the hell?" Johan shouted. Lucas ran up behind him, coughing. "Accidentally on purpose."

"Explain!" Johan demanded. Lucas pointed to the charred remnants of his carpentry tools. "Someone wants us scared. I just sped up the process."

Johan's stomach sank. "Speeding up what process?"

"The 'make-you-panic' process," Lucas said cheerfully, waving his arms like a man conducting an orchestra. "We're living in a thriller. We need drama!"

Karl, quiet as ever, examined the ashes. "This is a message," he said. "Clear and direct."

"Yeah," Johan said. "Message received: run."

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The night only got worse. Karl and Johan decided to follow a lead on the stolen watch. A man had been spotted near the docks with a briefcase that looked suspiciously like it could hold… priceless artefacts.

They parked two blocks away, hidden in the shadows. "You really think he has it?" Johan whispered. Karl didn't answer immediately. "I don't think. I know."

"Uh… comforting," Johan muttered.

They tailed the man across the empty streets. Footsteps echoed. The man turned a corner. Suddenly, he stopped. Johan froze.

Behind them, movement. Someone following. "Not us," Karl muttered. "Another shadow." The man ahead vanished into an alley. Karl gestured. "We split. Quick."

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The alley was narrow, dark, and smelled like garbage and wet stone. The man lunged. Johan barely dodged. Karl moved faster, his hand snapping out to strike the attacker's wrist. The knife clattered to the ground.

“Who sent you?” Karl demanded.

The man laughed, a cold, humourless sound. “You think catching me matters? You have no idea who you’re dealing with.”

Before Karl could respond, the man bolted into the darkness. Johan bent down to pick up the knife. “Great. Another clue.”

Lucas appeared, somehow, swinging a crowbar. “Need a hand?”

“Clearly,” Johan muttered.

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Later, back at Johan’s apartment, they regrouped. “Someone’s cleaning house,” Lucas said, shaking his head. “And we’re in the way.”

Karl leaned back, quiet. “Not in the way yet. But soon.”

“Soon?” Johan asked. “How soon?” Karl finally smiled, slightly. “When you least expect it.”

Johan looked at the watch on the table. Tick. Tick. Tick. The sound was growing louder. It wasn’t just a watch. It was a countdown.

"And what do we do?" Johan asked. Lucas grinned. "Well… we survive. Preferably with style. And maybe beer."

Karl shook his head. "We plan. Carefully. We watch. We wait. That's how silence becomes power."

Lucas raised an eyebrow. "And here I thought it was crowbars and chasing people through alleys."

Karl didn't respond. Johan didn't dare. The watch ticked. Outside, shadows moved like they had their own rhythm. And Johan realized: the past wasn't done with them yet. Not by a long shot.

The Weight of Silence

The morning was cold. Växjö streets were quiet, too quiet. Johan felt it in his chest, a storm was coming.

Karl Blom had stayed overnight at the apartment, silent as always, watching, waiting. Lucas had stayed too, claiming he "needed moral support" but mostly just making terrible coffee.

Johan eyed the watch on the table. It ticked relentlessly. Each tick was louder than the last in his head.

"We find him today," Karl said.

"Who?" Johan asked, though he already knew.

"The man who's been sending threats. The one who took the watch. The one who pushed Oskar Lindh."

Lucas groaned. "You people make revenge sound so… polite." Karl ignored him.

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They found him at the old docks. A shadow among shadows, briefcase in hand, arrogance in his step.

"You're late," Johan called, trying to sound braver than he felt. The man turned. Cold smile. "You have no idea what you're walking into."

"I have an idea," Karl said quietly. "And it ends tonight." Lucas muttered, "Here we go…"

The man lunged for the briefcase. Karl was faster. Johan tackled him from the side. Lucas swung a crowbar, not to hit, just to intimidate.

The man froze. "You think you can scare me with furniture?" he spat.

"We don't need furniture," Karl said. "We have the law. And patience."

The man's face twisted in frustration. "You don't understand! That watch..."

"Watch, documents, threats," Karl interrupted. "Done. Over. All traced back to you."

Johan noticed Karl's hand subtly move in his coat pocket. The watch. It was back. "You took what wasn't

yours," Karl said. "And that's the difference between you and us."

The man realized too late that Johan had secretly copied Oskar's notes, and Lucas had photographed the documents in the box. Evidence everywhere.

Police sirens wailed in the distance. The man panicked. He tried to run. Karl grabbed his arm. Lucas blocked the other side. Johan stepped forward.

"End of the line," Johan said. The man froze. Then slumped. Karl cuffed him.

* * * * * * * * * * *

Back at Johan's apartment, the three of them collapsed. "Is it really over?" Johan asked.

"Yes," Karl said. "For now. The past doesn't forget. But we can rest."

Lucas raised his beer. "To quiet men who do loud things!"

Johan laughed. "And to loud men who survive because quiet men planned everything." Karl didn't laugh. He just nodded.

The watch ticked on the table. Gold, intricate, relentless. But now it was theirs. Johan held it in his hand, feeling the weight of Oskar's life, his secrets, and the danger they had narrowly escaped.

"Some objects," Karl said softly, "carry weight. Not because of what they're worth. But because of what people did to keep them."

Johan raised his glass. "To quiet men. And the truths they carry." Karl didn't answer. He didn't need to. Silence was enough.

Outside, the wind rustled the trees. Växjö returned to normal. Almost. Johan smiled. For the first time in days, he felt like life made sense again. Until the next shadow. But that, he decided, could wait.

The End

THE EVEDAL ALIBI

Evedal Beach, 03:07 a.m.

The man died with a golf ball in his mouth.

Karl Blom would think about that detail later, how strange facts have a way of sticking when everything else blurs. At the time, all he saw was the body half-submerged at the shoreline, waves licking at stiff fingers, moonlight turning blood black.

A flashlight beam cut across the sand. "Victim's male. Forties, maybe," said Officer Nilsson. "And… uh… Karl?"

"What?"

"There's a mini-golf windmill stuck in his jacket."

Karl said nothing. He crouched, studying the scene. No footprints leading away. No weapon in sight. Just the sea, the night, and a ridiculous plastic obstacle meant for children.

Somewhere behind him, a man cleared his throat nervously. "I didn't mean to interrupt," the man said. "But technically, I was lining up a shot." Karl stood and turned. The witness was wearing neon-green golf pants. And smiling.

The Quiet Man

Karl Blom had learned early that silence made people nervous and nervous people talked.

The patrol car smelled faintly of wet sand, cheap aftershave, and something aggressively citrus. Karl drove with both hands on the wheel, eyes on the road, saying nothing. He didn't need to look in the rearview mirror to know the witness was vibrating back there like a loose wire.

After exactly four minutes of silence, the man cracked.

"So," he said brightly, leaning forward between the seats, "is this where I get coffee? Or is that later, after I recount the *trauma*?"

Karl waited another ten seconds. Just to be sure. "At three in the morning?" he asked calmly. The man grinned. "Peak performance hour." Karl glanced at him in the mirror.

Neon-green golf pants. Matching visor. A windbreaker emblazoned with a snarling cartoon goat shooting lightning from its horns.

"Name," Karl said.

"Mackan. Magnus, officially. Leijon." He puffed up. "You might've heard of me." Karl hadn't.

"You were practicing," Karl said, "golf."

"Adventure golf," Magnus corrected instantly. "Huge difference."

"It's miniature golf," Karl said. Magnus gasped, offended. "Tell that to the European Adventure Golf Federation."

"I will," Karl said. "When they investigate a homicide." That shut him up. Briefly.

They pulled into the Växjö station lot. Blue lights still flashed down by Evedal Beach, reflecting off the low clouds. The night wasn't done with them yet.

Inside the interrogation room, Magnus sat like a child forced into time-out, tapping his foot, spinning the visor in his hands.

Karl sat opposite him. Notebook open. Pen ready. He waited. Magnus coughed. “So… do you want me to start?”

“Yes,” Karl said. Magnus inhaled deeply. “Okay. Picture this. Hole seventeen. The Kraken Cove.” Karl didn’t look up. “Start with what you saw.”

“Right. Sorry. Occupational hazard.” Magnus leaned forward, suddenly earnest. “I was lining up a shot. Tricky angle. Windmill blades were rotating faster than usual—humidity does that. And then I hear this noise.”

“What kind of noise?” Karl asked.

“Breathing,” Magnus said. “Like someone had been sprinting. Desperate. Ugly breathing.” Karl wrote that down. “And then?”

“He bursts out of the trees. Stumbles. Falls right near the waterline.” Magnus swallowed. “He tried to say something. Couldn’t.”

"Why not?" Magnus hesitated. "Because his mouth was full." The room went quiet. "Full of what?" Karl asked.

Magnus looked away. "A golf ball." Karl finally looked up. "Not mine," Magnus added quickly. "Regulation size, though. Standard adventure-grade."

"Someone forced it into his mouth," Karl said. Magnus nodded. "He was clawing at his throat. Panicking. And then…" He snapped his fingers. "Nothing."

Karl closed the notebook. "Did you see anyone else?" Magnus shook his head. "No. But I felt like someone was watching." Karl stood. "That will be all for now."

"That's it?" Magnus said. "No follow-up questions? No dramatic accusations?"

"Not yet." Magnus relaxed. Too quickly. Karl noticed that too.

* * * * * * * * * *

The body lay where the tide had left it, moonlight turning the beach into something unreal. The forensic team worked efficiently, quietly. Karl crouched near the shoreline, careful not to disturb the sand.

Officer Nilsson joined him, chewing gum. “Victim’s Johan Pettersson,” Nilsson said. “Real estate guy. Bit of a bastard, if you believe the internet.”

“I usually do,” Karl said. Nilsson pointed. “And this.” The plastic windmill lay half-buried in the sand, snapped cleanly from its base. Karl picked it up. Cheap. Light. Harmless-looking. Not harmless.

“No signs of a struggle here,” Nilsson said. “No footprints leaving the beach.” Karl looked toward the trees.

“Which means?” Nilsson prompted.

“He didn’t come here willingly,” Karl said. Nilsson nodded. “Or someone’s very careful.”

Karl stood. The night wind cut through his jacket. Somewhere behind him, waves hissed and retreated, erasing evidence one ripple at a time.

* * * * * * * * * * *

Ida noticed it the second Karl stepped into their apartment. She always did. “You’re quiet,” she said from the sofa, legs tucked under her, a book open but unread.

"I always am." She studied him over the rim of her glasses. "No. You're *processing* quiet."

Karl took off his jacket. "Murder." She closed the book. "Bad one?"

"Golf-related." She blinked. "I'm sorry?" He poured himself a glass of water. "Man forced to choke on a golf ball." Ida stared. Then she laughed. A short, disbelieving sound. "Only you," she said.

Karl leaned against the counter. "Witness is a professional adventure golfer."

"That's not a thing."

"It is," Karl said. "Apparently."

She walked over, rested her head against his chest. "You going to sleep?"

"No."

"Thought so."

She squeezed his hand. "Don't bring the beach home with you." Karl didn't answer.

* * * * * * * * * *

He didn't sleep. At 05:12, his phone buzzed. Nilsson. "They found something," Nilsson said. "You'll want to see this."

The forest road near Evedal was narrow, muddy, barely used. A single set of tire tracks led into a clearing. A car sat there, engine cold. Karl circled it slowly.

"Plates run clean," Nilsson said. "Belongs to a Rolf Sanner." Karl froze.

"Former cop," Nilsson added. "Suspended. Corruption case." Karl looked inside the car. Golf gloves on the passenger seat. Wet shoes.

An empty ThunderGoat can in the cup holder. Karl straightened.

"Get me everything on Sanner," he said. "And bring in the golfer again." Nilsson frowned. "Why?" Karl stared into the trees, where the darkness seemed thicker.

"Because," he said, "someone else was at that beach." And they were still very much in play.

Low Light, High Tension

Karl Blom hated early mornings. They made people sloppy.

The Växjö police station buzzed with caffeine and bad moods when Karl walked in at 06:43. Phones rang. Chairs scraped. Someone argued loudly about a missing stapler. The night shift looked like survivors of a small war.

Karl went straight to the evidence board.

VICTIM: Johan Pettersson
CAUSE OF DEATH: Asphyxiation
WEAPON: Golf ball (forced ingestion)
KEY LOCATION: Evedal Beach
WITNESS: Magnus "Mackan" Leijon
PERSON OF INTEREST: Rolf Sanner (former officer)

Lucas appeared beside him, holding two coffees. “Morning,” Lucas said. “Or whatever this is.” Karl accepted the cup. “You look cheerful.”

Lucas grinned. “I slept. You didn’t.”

“Correct.”

Lucas scanned the board. “So. Murder by miniature golf. I retire for one day and this happens.”

“Adventure golf,” Karl said.

Lucas snorted. “Of course it is.”

They were interrupted by Inspector Holm, who had the permanent expression of a man regretting every career choice he’d ever made.

“Sanner’s not answering his phone,” Holm said. “Cabin by the lake is empty.”

“When was he last seen?” Karl asked.

“Two days ago. Drinking. Loudly.”

Lucas raised an eyebrow. “So he murders a man, dumps the body, and vanishes?”

"Or," Karl said, "he watched someone else do it." Holm sighed. "I want the witness back in. Now."

* * * * * * * * * *

Magnus Leijon arrived twenty minutes later, still wearing the neon pants. Karl noticed immediately that he looked different. Less loud. More alert.

Magnus sat down, folded his hands, and said, "You found something." Karl didn't respond.

Magnus nodded to himself. "Yeah. You did."

"What didn't you tell us?" Karl asked. Magnus licked his lips. "I told you everything." Karl leaned forward. "No. You told us what you *thought* we wanted." Silence stretched.

Finally, Magnus exhaled. "There was a guy near the trees. Watching me." Lucas stiffened. "Describe him."

"Tall. Broad. Hoodie. Hands in pockets." Magnus hesitated. "He didn't move when the man fell. Just… stood there."

"Did he approach the victim?" Karl asked. "No. He left. Calmly."

"Before or after the man died?"

"Before." Karl closed the notebook. "Why didn't you mention this?" Magnus spread his hands. "Because I thought it was one of you." That landed hard. Lucas muttered, "That's comforting."

Magnus looked at Karl. "He had the posture. The stillness. Like someone used to watching bad things happen." Karl felt a flicker of something cold.

* * * * * * * * * * *

They found the cabin just after noon. Lake Växjö lay flat and grey under a low sky. The cabin stood alone, weathered, quiet. Too quiet. Karl approached slowly, hand near his weapon. The door was ajar.

Inside smelled of stale coffee and damp wood. A duffel bag lay open on the floor. Clothes missing. A laptop gone. Lucas crouched by the table. "Fresh footprints outside. He left in a hurry."

Karl moved toward the back door. A shadow shifted. Karl reacted without thinking. "Police!" The figure bolted. Karl ran.

Branches whipped his face as he chased the man through the trees. The ground sloped toward the lake, slippery with moss. "Stop!" Karl shouted. The man glanced back. Not Sanner. Younger. Leaner. The

man slipped, fell, scrambled up and vanished into the reeds.

Karl reached the edge just in time to see ripples spreading across the water. Lucas arrived breathless. "You good?" Karl nodded, staring at the lake. "Who was that?"

"Someone who didn't want to talk."

* * * * * * * * * *

Back at the station, Karl stared at the new photo pinned to the board. The man from the forest. Captured on a nearby traffic camera. Lucas whistled. "That's not Sanner."

"No," Karl said. "But he knows something." His phone buzzed. A text from an unknown number.

STOP DIGGING.
NEXT TIME, YOU WON'T MISS.

Karl stared at the screen. Lucas leaned over. "That for you?"

"Yes."

Lucas frowned. "That's not great."

Karl slipped the phone into his pocket. “No. But it’s honest.”

Across the room, Magnus Leijon was laughing loudly, recounting his story to anyone who would listen. Karl watched him. Listened. And realized something else was very wrong. The witness wasn’t just lucky. He was standing far too close to the fire.

The Last Hole

Karl Blom didn't like threats. Not because they scared him. Because they were inefficient. He stared at the message again.

STOP DIGGING. NEXT TIME, YOU WON'T MISS.

Lucas leaned back in his chair. "You know, when criminals start texting cops, it usually means we're close."

"Or careless," Karl said.

Inspector Holm joined them, rubbing his temples. "We've got a dead developer, a missing ex-cop, a mystery runner, and a professional mini-golfer who may or may not be a walking neon distraction."

"Adventure golfer," Lucas said automatically. Holm glared at him. "I don't care if he plays competitive croquet. I want answers." Karl's phone buzzed again.

This time, it was a location pin.

Evedal Adventure Golf Course.
21:00.

Lucas frowned. "That's either a trap or the weirdest invitation I've ever seen." Karl stood. "It's both."

* * * * * * * * * * *

The course was closed, but the lights were on. That bothered Karl. Windmills spun slowly. Fake rocks cast long shadows. The pirate ship creaked softly in the breeze.

Magnus Leijon stood by Hole Seventeen, Kraken Cove, hands on hips, visor tilted back. "You came!" Magnus said brightly. "Good. Because I think someone's trying to kill me."

Lucas muttered, "Always reassuring." Karl approached calmly. "Why did you call us here?" Magnus swallowed. "Because Johan Pettersson wasn't the target." Karl stopped. "Explain."

"He came to meet *me*," Magnus said. "Wanted me to throw a tournament. Claimed sponsors would follow."

"And you said no," Karl guessed.

"I laughed," Magnus admitted. "Then he got angry. Then Rolf showed up." Lucas stiffened. "Rolf Sanner." Magnus nodded. "He was shaking. Said Johan ruined his life. I thought it was just talk." A twig snapped.

Karl's hand went to his weapon. "Police!" Lucas shouted. A figure stepped out from behind the artificial volcano. Rolf Sanner looked worse than his file photo. Unshaven. Eyes wild.

"I didn't mean to kill him," Rolf said. "I just wanted him to feel powerless." Magnus whispered, "He brought the golf ball." Rolf laughed bitterly. "Seemed fitting." Karl stepped forward. "Drop it, Rolf."

Rolf's gaze flicked to Magnus. "He saw too much." The gun came up. Karl moved. The shot shattered a windmill blade.

Plastic exploded. Lucas tackled Magnus to the ground. Karl fired once, clean, precise. Rolf collapsed, screaming, clutching his leg. Sirens wailed in the distance.

Magnus lay on the turf, breathing hard. “So,” he said shakily, “is this covered by my sponsorship insurance?” Lucas laughed despite himself.

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Rolf Sanner confessed within hours. He’d followed Johan to the beach, planning to scare him. The argument escalated. The golf ball had been a cruel joke, until it wasn’t.

The runner in the woods? A local dealer who panicked and fled. The threat texts? Rolf again. One last attempt to control the board. Case closed. Clean.

At the pub a week later, Lucas raised his glass. “To Karl. Solving a murder with a nine-iron’s worth of patience.”

Magnus grinned. “I’m switching to daytime practice.” Ida squeezed Karl’s hand. “You done carrying the beach with you?” Karl looked around. The noise. The laughter. The truth settled.

“Yes,” he said. Outside, the lake was calm. Still. Honest. Karl Blom finished his drink. Some stories ended loudly.

The important ones didn't have to. They just needed someone quiet enough to hear the truth when it finally spoke.

The End

The missing tome

Thanos Kalamidas

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Three Constable Karl Blom Mysteries

Thanos Kalamidas, a multipublished writer, cartoonist and illustrator; born and grew up in a picturesque neighbourhood on the mountainside of Hymettus in Athens, Greece. Then his life took him to Berlin, Germany and to London, UK for studies. After a brief stay in Yorkshire he moved his life to Paris, France while working in Tokyo, Japan and in Cape Town, South Africa. In the last 25 years he became a permanent Scandinavian resident and recently, in his glorious sixth decade, he moved to a scenic village in the Växjö area.

THE missing TOME

THANOS KALAMIDAS
Author of the Polisinspektör Mikael Hansson series